

X Vol 4 Russia & Cuba  
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 X Pers 2 John STENNIS  
 X Pers 2 Kenneth B. KEATING

## A Revised Picture of Cuba

A revised estimate of the strength of Soviet forces remaining in Cuba has indicated that the Central Intelligence Agency and military authorities had greatly underestimated it.

The Senate Preparedness subcommittee, in a report on an assessment by U.S. intelligence authorities made public yesterday, criticized the CIA and military authorities for what they said were "substantial errors" in evaluating information indicating a serious missile-arms-troop buildup in Cuba last summer and fall.

It not only emphasized that the combined Soviet and Cuban forces now on the island are powerful enough defensively to offer severe opposition to any attack, but also expressed doubt that all the Soviet long-range missiles and bombers had been pulled out of Cuba. It said intelligence chiefs admit there is reason for grave concern that such weapons might be hidden in some of Cuba's thousands of caves.

### Fear Weapons Hidden in Caves

This led Sen. Stennis (D-Miss), chairman of the subcommittee, to declare that the country's highest priority should and must be the complete removal of all Russians from Cuba.

He did not say how this should be done, but asserted: "To those who say that this involves risks and the danger of nuclear war, I reply that there comes a time — as it did last October — when risks must be taken to protect and preserve our national interests.

"We must demonstrate, by deed as well as word, that the historic Monroe Doctrine is still part and parcel of our national policy and that, regardless of risks, we are not prepared to abandon it now."

The Monroe Doctrine had the effect of telling European nations to let Latin America alone. A fundamental U.S. policy ever since, it has been interpreted in modern times as aiming to prevent the extension to this hemisphere of a despotic political system contrary to the independent status of American nations.

The eight-member subcommittee, in its report, demanded "positive" but unspecified steps to prevent the spread of communism from what it called its Cuban foothold.

### 'Positive' Steps Are Demanded

It foresaw the possibility of the subversion and exploitation of Latin-American nations by one, "until the entire hemisphere is lost and the Communist goal of isolating the United States has been attained."

This report lends considerable substance to the criticism of Sen. Keating (R-NY) that the administration has been underestimating the Soviet menace in Cuba, at least publicly.

This may be so, but the fact remains that the information available to him — as well as to the Senate subcommittee — also was available to the administration. The President can hardly be blamed for taking steps to insure that public alarm would not be raised at a time when it might jeopardize his efforts to compel Soviet Premier Khrushchev to withdraw his forces from Cuba.

But that time now is rapidly passing, if it hasn't already done so. Perhaps it is fitting that a sterner position be taken if the diplomatic efforts are failing. Only the President and his closest advisers are in a position to know this. There still are many who believe that Premier Khrushchev still is seeking a face-saving means of completing his pledge of withdrawal.